The Cleveland Museum of Art

Noted Scholar and Curator Appointed the George P. Bickford Curator of Indian and Southeast Asian Art

News Release
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Wednesday, May 16, 2012

Caroline Guscott

The Cleveland Museum of Art
cguscott@clevelandart.org
(216) 707-2261

CLEVELAND (May 16, 2012) – The Cleveland Museum of Art announces the appointment of Sonya Rhie Quintanilla as the George P. Bickford Curator of Indian and Southeast Asian Art, following an international search. As the museum moves toward the completion of its transformational building expansion and Asian collection reinstallation in 2013, Quintanilla will have the opportunity to oversee the installation of the museum's superb Indian and Southeast Asian art collections.

"I am extremely excited that Sonya is joining our curatorial staff. She has the benefit of building upon the legacy established by former curator Stan Czuma, who helped to make Cleveland one of the greatest collections of Indian and Southeast Asia art in the country," states C. Griffith Mann, Cleveland Museum of Art deputy director and chief curator. "Sonya recognizes the caliber of these collections and is already thinking ambitiously about exhibitions, acquisitions, and publications that will further distinguish the museum as a leader in this field."

The Cleveland Museum of Art has long been recognized nationally and internationally for the quality of its holdings of Indian and Southeast Asian art. The museum's holdings in this area include works of art from India, the Himalayas, and Southeast Asia. The collection covers the period of the entire artistic activity on the Indian subcontinent from the earliest (Neolithic) period until the 19th century. While the heart of the collections comprise remarkable works of sculpture and highly accomplished paintings, the museum's holdings also include decorative arts such as jewels and armor. It is a well-balanced collection, both in scope and breadth, and is especially distinguished for its focus on the earlier periods.

"The Cleveland Museum of Art is famed for having one of the world's finest collections of art from India and neighboring regions, and for more than twenty years, I have turned to the Cleveland collections as a constant source for my research in Indian sculpture and painting. Now, I have the privilege of working closely with the entire holdings, including the many unpublished objects," says Quintanilla. "I am particularly delighted to join the curatorial team at Cleveland at such an exciting moment in

institutional history, and together with my colleagues, look forward to generating landmark exhibitions, groundbreaking research, major acquisitions, institutional partnerships and programs that promise to be memorable and models for the field."

Quintanilla is currently the Curator of Asian Art for The San Diego Museum of Art and has held that position since 2004. In this role, she curated numerous permanent collection installations and rotations, including the recent *Temple, Palace, Mosque: Southern Asian and Persian Art; In the Company Manner: Indian–British Painting, ca. 1770–1890;* and *Emerging Elites: Indo–Muslim Art in Transition (ca. 1739–1858).* She is finalizing the installation for *Icon and Ornament: Art and Thought of East Asia,* a complete reinstallation of the San Diego museum's East Asian galleries funded by a major grant from the National Endowment for the Arts set to open in December 2012. She has curated and organized traveling exhibitions including *Into India: South Asian Paintings from The San Diego Museum of Art* currently on view at the Museo Thyssen-Bornemisza, Madrid, and upcoming exhibitions of paintings of the *Ramayana* at the Seattle Art Museum (opening in September 1, 2012) and Chinese art from the Suzhou Art Museum featuring reliquaries from the region's Buddhist pagodas (opening in San Diego December 15, 2012).

Quintanilla is a prolific scholar, with publications that include numerous reviews, articles, and essays, as well as exhibition catalogues. Her PhD dissertation, *History of Early Stone Sculpture at Mathura, Ca. 150 BCE–100 CE* (Brill, 2007), provides the first comprehensive analysis and chronology of the earliest known stone sculptures from the north Indian city of Mathura. Quintanilla's ground-breaking exhibition, *Rhythms of India: The Art of Nandalal Bose* (San Diego, 2008) involved a partnership with the Government of India, and was shown at The San Diego Museum of Art, the Philadelphia Museum of Art, and the National Gallery of Modern Art in New Delhi. Her most recent publications include the exhibition catalogues *Dreams and Diversions: Japanese Woodblock Prots from The San Diego Museum of Art,* published by the museum in association with Marquand Books, and *Visiones de la India,* published by the Museo Thyssen-Bornemisza, Madrid.

Quintanilla has taught at the Universities of California, San Diego, and Irvine on such topics as *Arts of India, Indian Painting,* and *Art of Tibet.* She has presented papers at prominent conferences and symposia including the Annual Anne D'Harnoncourt Symposium, Philadelphia Museum of Art, the College Art Association, the Annual Conference on South Asia, and Association for Asian Studies Annual Meetings.

Sonya Rhie Quintanilla received her B.A. in South Asian Art and Religion from Smith College in 1993 and her doctorate in Indian Art History from Harvard University in 1999. She is the recipient of major grants from the Farhang Foundation, the Andrew W. Mellon Fellowship in Humanistic Studies, and the Woodrow Wilson National Fellowship Foundation. Quintanilla will begin her appointment at the Cleveland Museum of Art in September.

# # #

About the Cleveland Museum of Art

The Cleveland Museum of Art is renowned for the quality and breadth of its collection, which includes more than 63,000 artworks and spans 6,000 years of achievement in the arts. The museum is a significant international forum for exhibitions, scholarship and performing arts and is a leader in digital innovations. One of the top comprehensive art museums in the nation, recognized for its award-winning Open Access program and free of charge to all, the Cleveland Museum of Art is located in the University Circle neighborhood.

The museum is supported in part by residents of Cuyahoga County through a public grant from Cuyahoga Arts & Culture and made possible in part by the Ohio Arts Council (OAC), which receives support from the State of Ohio and the National Endowment for the Arts. The OAC is a state agency that funds and supports quality arts experiences to strengthen Ohio communities culturally, educationally and economically. For more information about the museum and its holdings, programs and events, call 888-CMA-0033 or visit cma.org [1].

Press Announcements [2]

Source URL: https://www.clevelandart.org/about/press/noted-scholar-and-curator-appointed-george-p-bickford-curator-indian-and-southeast-asian

Links

[1] https://www.clevelandart.org

[2] https://www.clevelandart.org/about/press/media-kit